Mexico Students Have Met a Surface Setback

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By Lewis H. Diuguid
Washington Post Staff Writer

MEXICO CITY, Oct. 5—Whatever the long-term effects on Mexico of this week's violence, it superficially has set back the stu-

News Analysis

dents who started the agitation two months ago.

This is just the surface result. The student leaders who are not jailed or hospitalized have gone underground. The week remaining before the opening of the Olympic Games here should show whether these resourceful youths will again be heard from.

During the campus strikes, rallies, troop occupations and occasional clashes since late July, the student leadership has settled on a half dozen demands as the price for restored order. Most of the demands seem further from realization now than at the outset. They are:

• Dissolution of the riot police, whom the students accuse of brutality. Today these men in blue with firemen's helmets are more pervasive than ever and they have been augmented by several thousand army troops. They even hold the midtown Plaza of the Three Cultures, where at least 30 are reported to have died Wednesday night, under armed occupation. Another man, shot there yesterday, has died.

• Dismissal of top police officials. These men not only are still on the job, but, as a columnist here pointed out, they are working overtime.

• Restoration of the autonomy of the National University that was occupied last month. The troops have been evacuated since, but many of them simply have moved next door to offer protection to 3000 athletes practicing around Olympic Village. A few schools in the city still are under the army.

When the troops moved out of the National University, the students resumed their occupation. The several dozen leaders, for the most part they kept carefully anonymous, directed all the frantic but altogether nonacademic activity on the campus.

• Release by the state of "political prisoners." There never were many persons who might qualify for that title. But if those detained this week are included, the number has leaped up. Unofficial estimates run between 2000 and 3000.

• Repeal of the anti-subversive article in the criminal code. The lower legislative house is taking testimony on this issue and the Mexican Academy of Penal Science has recommended abrogation of this article, written in 1941 with Nazis in mind but used in the '60s to jail convicted Communists and others.

• Compensation for the wounded and survivors of the dead in the battles. No such promise to provide this has been forthcoming from the government.

Though the students appear to have gained little, there has been some public show of support—and this is notable in a country where virtually all popular institutions are controlled by the government or the Institutional Revolutionary Party that dominates it.

Doctors at the Social Security Hospital are on a 72-hour strike to protest "the unjustified act of aggression, the target of which has come to be the Mexican people."

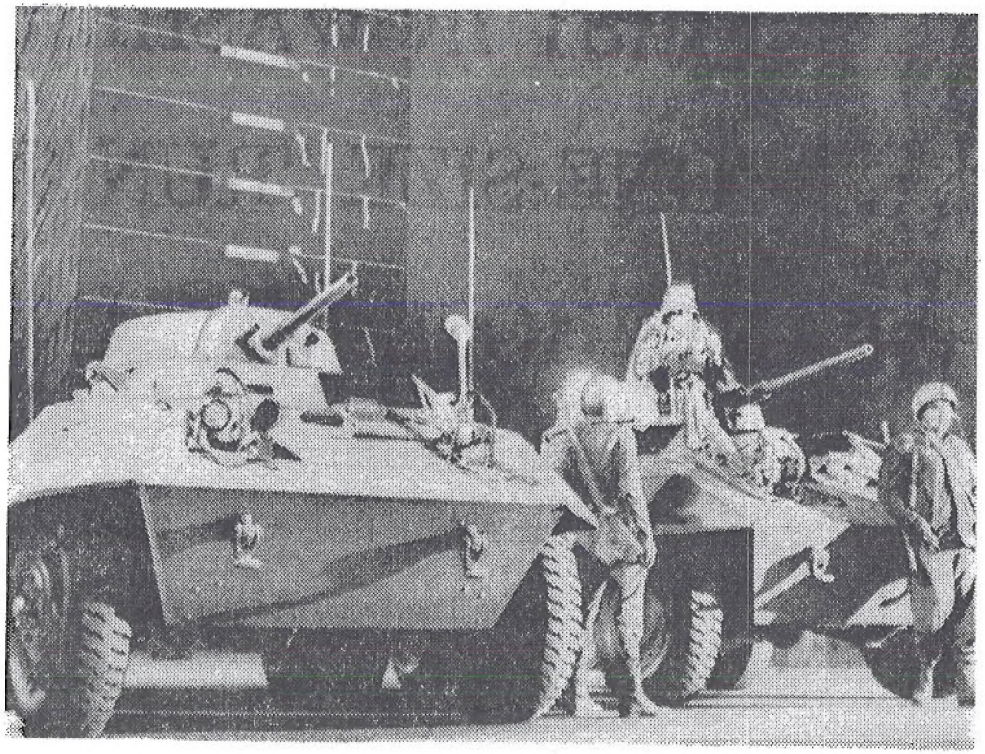
In the House of Deputies, the government Party fully supported the activity of the troops. But the few opposition members took strong exception and fist fights broke out in the gallery.

The deputy who introduced the call for support of the government gave this elliptical justification: "We prefer to see the tanks of our army safeguarding our institutions than foreign tanks guarding their own interests."

Meanwhile, a man once jailed under the article and then given a presidential release, the Communist muralist David A. Siqueiros, was opening a retrospective exposition of his works at a gallery in the elegant tourist section of the city.

One of the more baffling aspects of the student revolt is why they have not broadened their demands in areas that might bring them further support.

One young government official put it this way: "There are so many other critical questions in Mexico — so much official corruption, the domination of the food industry by United States interests—that one could compromise the country's very sovereignty. If the students pressed this sort of issue their movement could become very significant indeed."



Photos by United Press International

Armored cars and troops, at left, stand guard at vocational school in Mexico City near where sniper killed passerby Friday. At right, cars are searched for weapons before being allowed to enter adjacent Tlatelolco Plaza apartment complex. Area was scene of army-student clash Wednesday that left at least 30 dead.